employment of children in hazardous occupations and processes and regulates their working in others. Government is committed to elimination of child labour in all its forms. However, considering the nature and magnitude of the problem, Government is following a sequential approach of initially withdrawing and rehabilitating children working in hazardous occupations and processes.

(b) Yes, Sir. Suggestions are received from time to time from State Governments and other authorities. Some of these suggestions include fixing a minimum age for employment, prohibiting all forms of child labour, redefining child as a person below the age of 18 years, setting up of Special Courts for child labour cases, raising the penalties, making specific provisions to cover the offence of trafficking of children for labour, etc.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal presently under the consideration of the Government to bring in new legislation. However, consultations are held with State Government and other stakeholders on the suggestions received.

**EPE investment in Stock market**

1735. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governmen as decided to keep open its option to invest 5 per cent of the Employees Provident Fund in the Stock market;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that trade unions have not agreed for this proposal; and

(d) if so, the details of the discussions held with the Central trade unions and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (d) The Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund in which central trade unions are represented, in its 178th meeting has resolved not to exercise the option of investing 5% of the Employees' Provident Fund monies in equities.

**Effect of labour training on productivity**

†1736: DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production in the country may be raised upto 61% by increasing 10% expenditure of GDP on labour training;

(b) if not, assessment of Government in this regard; and

(c) the quantum of amount increased by Government in the funds earmarked for the expansion and development of training programme meant for augmentation of labour skill from 2004-05 to 2006-07?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Agriculture, Industry & Services sectors are the

†riginal notice of the question was received in Hindi.

main constituents of the GDP. Skill training in these sectors is being provided by various Ministries/Departments and also by private training providers. It is presumed that production and productivity increase on employing skilled workforce. It has now become imperative to use skilled workforce due to rapid technological advancement and changing global manufacturing practices.

DGE&T under Ministry of Labour & Employment has taken following initiatives during 2004-05 to 2006-07 for upgradation of Government Industrial Training Institutes in the country:

(i) Upgradation of one hundred Govt. Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) with domestic funding at a cost of Rs. 160 crore.

(ii) Upgradation of 400 Govt. ITIs with World Bank assistance at a cost of Rs. 1581 crore.

**Amendment in the Plantation Labour Act**

1737. SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the Plantation Labour Act, which is pending since so many years;

(b) whether it is a fact that Assam Government has not been able to implement the Gratuity Act for the Tea Worker of Assam since last two years;

(c)if so, the reason therefor;

(d) whether there is any proposal to amend the Bonus Act; and

(e) if so, what is the present position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The State Government of Assam is responsible for proper implementation of the statutory provisions of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 in respect of the industrial establishments including the tea estates falling under State spheres. The Government of Assam is enforcing the implementation of these provisions through the enforcement agencies under the Commissioner of Labour.

Some confusion arose in between about the authority of the enforcement machinery under Labour Commissioner to enforce the provisions of Gratuity Act with a perception that implementation of this Act for tea establishments will be the responsibility of Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund and Pension Fund (ATPPF&PF). The matter has been made clear *vide* Government of Assam's Notification No. GLR37/93/43 dated 6th October, 2007 and No. GLR37/93/42 dated 6th October, 2007, wherein the enforcement agencies of Labour Commissioner has been asked to look after the implementation of Gratuity Act for both non tea establishments as well as tea establishments.

Thus, it was a brief period in the year 2006-07, when there was some gap in monitoring the implementation of various provisions of Gratuity Act for tea establishments only.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Bill, 2007 has been introduced in the Parliament so as to replace the Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Ordinance promulgated on 27th October, 2007, by an Act of Parliament.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.